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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4810  
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0183  
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UNCLAS AMMAN 000826

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA, ISN/NESS, ISN/RA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY FOR  
NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM

11. (SBU) During a DOE/NNSA Middle East Infrastructure Preparedness Workshop in Amman from March 22-26, Commissioner for Nuclear Fuel Cycle in the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC) Ned Xoubi outlined Jordan's efforts to develop human capacity for implementing a civilian nuclear energy program. He underscored that the Government of Jordan (GOJ) places a high priority on this area and estimated that about 50% of funding went towards human resource development when the nuclear energy program started about two years ago. Xoubi highlighted that all of Jordan's tenders for nuclear energy infrastructure projects contain an element of training for Jordanian engineers, geologists, chemists, and other experts related to nuclear power, safety, and maintenance.

12. (U) Demonstrating Jordan's attention to education in the field of nuclear energy, Xoubi mentioned that approximately 5,000 students graduate each year from Jordan's universities with bachelors degrees in scientific fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, health physics, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and industrial engineering. Approximately 2,000 students also graduate in scientific fields from Jordan's community colleges. Jordan established its first undergraduate nuclear engineering program at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) in 2007. Xoubi said the program's structure and curriculum follows the American university model in the 1980s, when the U.S. nuclear energy program was more robust. Twenty students are expected to graduate from the JUST program in 2011, 37 students in 2012, and 33 students in 2013. Jordan also has graduate programs in nuclear physics at Jordan University in Amman, Balqa University in Salt, and Yarmouk University in Irbid.

13. (SBU) Xoubi noted that a number of Jordanian masters students are currently studying abroad, specifically one in nuclear instrument and control in France, two in nuclear physics in China, two in nuclear technology in Germany, and two PhD students in nuclear engineering in the U.S. Xoubi said that in most cases the foreign universities have provided scholarships with the JAEC sometimes providing an additional stipend. JAEC plans to advertise soon five new scholarships to study abroad this year.

14. (SBU) COMMENT: Despite positive steps taken in this area,

it is not clear that Jordan has a comprehensive human resource development strategy that addresses the various manpower requirements beyond nuclear physicists. Given Jordan's high official unemployment rate of about 13%, there is the potential for creation of additional jobs for Jordanians in supporting industries, for example in the construction field which is currently dominated by foreign workers in Jordan. The GOJ planned to send three representatives from JAEC, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, and the Ministry of Labor to the DOE/NNSA seminar from March 30-April 2 in Morocco on "Human Resources for Civil Nuclear Power: Developing a National Strategy." The seminar presented an important opportunity for GOJ officials to focus on such human resource issues and develop a broader strategy.

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